



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Plainwell PCB Cleanup Proceeding on Schedule

Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund Site
Kalamazoo, Michigan August 2007

Informational open houses

EPA is holding two open house sessions Aug. 22 so you can learn more about activities under way on the Kalamazoo River cleanup. Both will be at the Comfort Inn, 622 Allegan St., Plainwell, Mich. People can attend either identical session from 1:30-3 p.m. or 6:30-8 p.m. No formal presentations are planned. EPA representatives and other officials will be available to meet one-on-one with the public to discuss site activities. If special accommodations are needed, contact EPA Community Involvement Coordinator Don de Blasio at 800-621-8431 Ext. 64360 (weekdays, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.), or deblasio.don@epa.gov by Aug. 15.

Contact EPA

For more information, or if you have comments about the Kalamazoo River cleanup, you may contact these EPA representatives:

Don de Blasio

Community Involvement Coordinator
312-886-4360 or 800-621-8431,
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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 and state partner Michigan Department of Environmental Quality continue to oversee this summer's dredging at the Plainwell Impoundment on the Kalamazoo River. The cleanup work is being performed by contractors hired by responsible parties Millennium Holdings LLC and Georgia-Pacific LLC. Dredging is proceeding on schedule and since work began in early June, nearly 6,200 cubic yards or 180 truckloads of PCB-contaminated sediment (mud) have been removed from the river and nearby banks. PCBs are polychlorinated biphenyls, a chemical compound commonly used by industry that at high concentrations and exposures can cause illness in humans and wildlife.

The Plainwell waste is being divided into sediment containing 50 parts per million (ppm) or more of PCBs and material with lower concentrations. Under the federal Toxic Substances and Control Act, EPA regulates the use, storage and disposal of sediment with PCB concentrations exceeding 50 ppm. One part PCB per million parts sediment is a tiny amount, similar to one second in 12 days. Of the total removed so far, about 1,035 cubic yards of sediment with PCBs above the 50 ppm level have been sent to Environmental Quality Co.'s Wayne Disposal Landfill in Belleville, Mich. Another 5,145 cubic yards of sediment with less than 50 ppm PCBs, which is considered nonhazardous waste, have been sent to Allied Waste's C and C Landfill near Marshall, Mich.

Under an agreement this spring between EPA and the responsible companies, Kalamazoo River sediment dug up in the Plainwell Impoundment cleanup next year will be sent off-site to commercial landfills for disposal. Before the Plainwell dredging work resumes in the spring of 2008, Millennium Holdings and Georgia-Pacific will recommend for EPA approval commercial disposal facilities that hold the proper permits to handle the contaminated sediment removed from the river. Those facilities have not yet been identified as the responsible parties negotiate with disposal companies. When completed, the Plainwell cleanup will have removed about 132,000 cubic yards of sediment containing 4,400 pounds of PCBs. The estimated cost of the removal action is \$30 million and is expected to continue through the fall of 2008. Site information including new photos is posted at www.epa.gov/region5/sites/kalproject.

Supplemental sampling project

EPA cleanup projects performed under the Superfund program sometimes include both near-term and long-term activities. On the Kalamazoo River site, short-term cleanups – like the Plainwell dredging – are coordinated by EPA's "removal" section, while long-term pollution investigations and cleanup projects are performed by EPA's "remedial" staff. Short-term

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removal projects are done when scientists conclude contamination threatens people and wildlife with imminent exposure to dangerous substances. The PCBs lying unprotected in the mud of the Plainwell Impoundment are thought to pose just such a threat to people and to animals that eat fish that have swallowed the chemical compound.

While the Plainwell dredging proceeds, the Superfund remedial process continues on other sections of the river. Under another agreement with EPA, Millennium Holdings and Georgia-Pacific will pay for a \$15 million supplemental sampling and analysis project along the entire 80-mile length of the site. The Kalamazoo River Superfund area stretches from Saugatuck on Lake Michigan to the Morrow Dam. EPA believes this additional sampling and analysis must be completed before any final cleanup decisions can be made for the Kalamazoo River. The sampling in this comprehensive project will initially target the river reach between the Morrow and Plainwell dams, including Portage Creek. The study will identify the extent and location of PCB contamination along the river.

Other cleanup actions

In addition to the removal action at the Plainwell Impoundment, cleanup developments on other parts of the Kalamazoo River site this summer include:

- EPA is reviewing an MDEQ study on the nature and extent of contamination at the Allied Paper Landfill. When the review is completed this fall, the potentially responsible parties will use the study to develop cleanup alternatives for the landfill. After the alternatives are developed, EPA will issue a document called a proposed plan that will be made available for public review and comment.
- For the Willow Boulevard/A-Site Landfill, EPA has begun negotiations with the potentially responsible parties for designing and implementing the cleanup plan developed for the landfill. Work on the cleanup plan, which includes capping the landfill and installing a monitoring network, is expected to begin in 2008.
- Weyerhaeuser has begun work on the erosion control system at the 12th Street Landfill under the terms of its agreement with EPA to design and implement the cleanup remedy for this part of the Kalamazoo River site. Weyerhaeuser will dig up contaminated sediment from the channel next to the landfill, place sediment in the landfill, and re-grade the eastern edge of the facility that lies alongside the channel.

The new slope will be constructed to prevent erosion of the landfill when the river is rerouted to its original channel, which is part of the design for the Plainwell Impoundment removal action.

- Weyerhaeuser has also agreed—to investigate and clean up the Plainwell Mill property—to remove PCB-contaminated floodplains on the river banks adjacent to the mill. EPA and MDEQ are reviewing plans for an in-depth examination of the nature and extent of hazardous waste at the Plainwell Mill.
- Georgia-Pacific completed the removal of hazardous waste from certain areas of its Kalamazoo mill and sediment from nearby floodplains. Most of this waste was consolidated with the material in the Willow Boulevard/A-Site Landfill and will be capped as part of the final cleanup for that part of the Kalamazoo site.

Information libraries

The public can read documents related to the Kalamazoo River Superfund site at the following places:

Kalamazoo Public Library

315 S. Rose St.
Kalamazoo

Charles Ransom Library

80 S. Sherwood Ave.
Plainwell

Allegan Public Library

331 Hubbard St.
Allegan

Otsego District Library

219 S. Farmer St.
Otsego

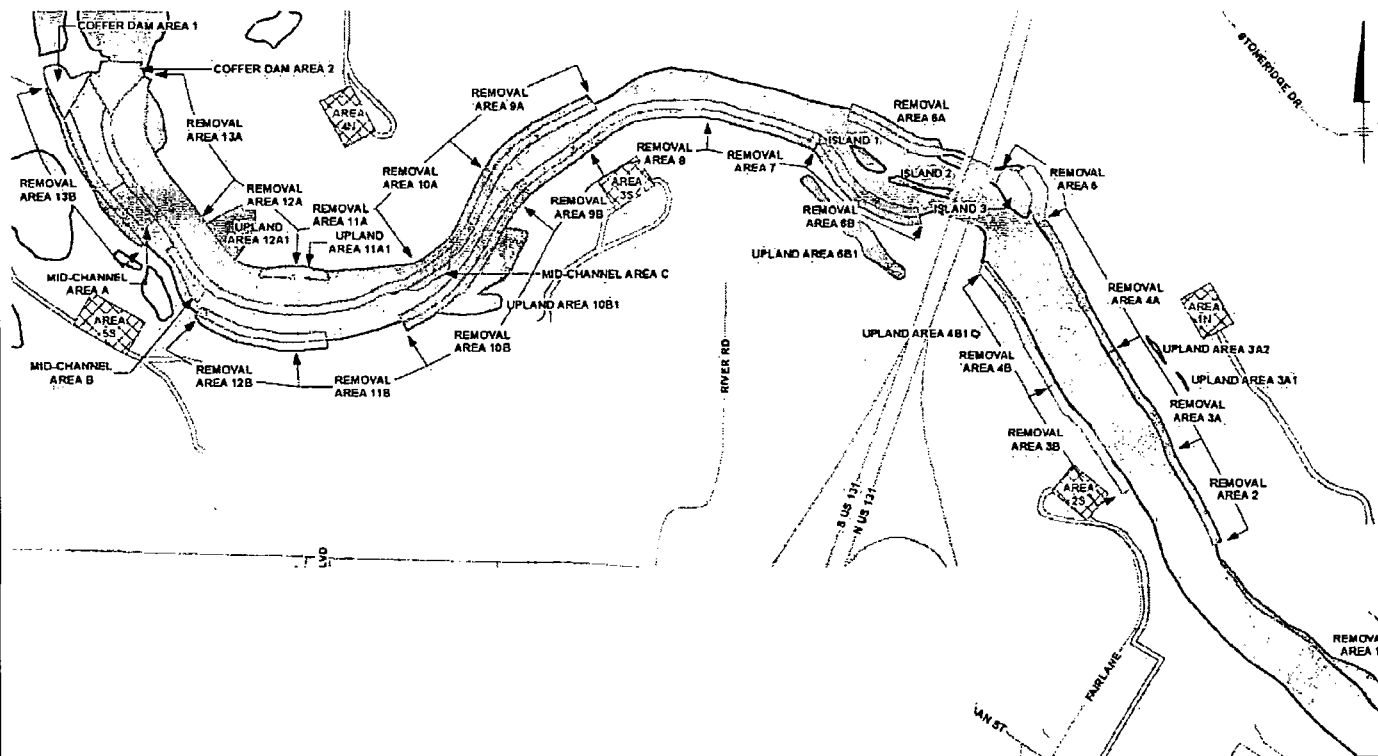
Saugatuck-Douglas Library

10 Mixer St.
Douglas

Waldo Library

Western Michigan University
903 W. Michigan Ave.
Kalamazoo

Targeted Removal Areas—Former Plainwell Impoundment



Map courtesy of the Kalamazoo River Study Group

What are PCBs?

PCBs are a group of toxic chemicals that were produced in the United States between 1929 and 1978 for use primarily as industrial coolants, insulators, and lubricants. PCBs were used in hundreds of industrial and commercial applications including carbonless copy paper—which contributed to the Kalamazoo River contamination—and many other applications because they were stable and resisted wear and chemical breakdown.

The same chemical properties that made PCBs useful to industry are now responsible for persistent levels of PCBs remaining in the environment, including the Kalamazoo River. PCBs last in the environment because they adhere readily to organic material in sediment and soil and tend to build up in the fatty tissue of fish and other animals. PCBs have been demonstrated to cause a variety of adverse health effects in animals. PCBs cause cancer and noncancer health effects on the immune, reproductive, nervous and endocrine systems. Studies suggest PCBs have similar effects on people.

The different health effects of PCBs may be interrelated, as alterations in one system may have significant implications for other systems of the body. The potential adverse environmental and health effects of PCBs were not well understood until 1977, when the government banned most uses of PCBs.

On the Web:

epa.gov/region5/sites/kalproject/

ALLIED PAPER/PORTAGE CREEK/KALAMAZOO RIVER SUPERFUND SITE: Plainwell PCB Cleanup Proceeding on Schedule

FIRST CLASS

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(details inside)